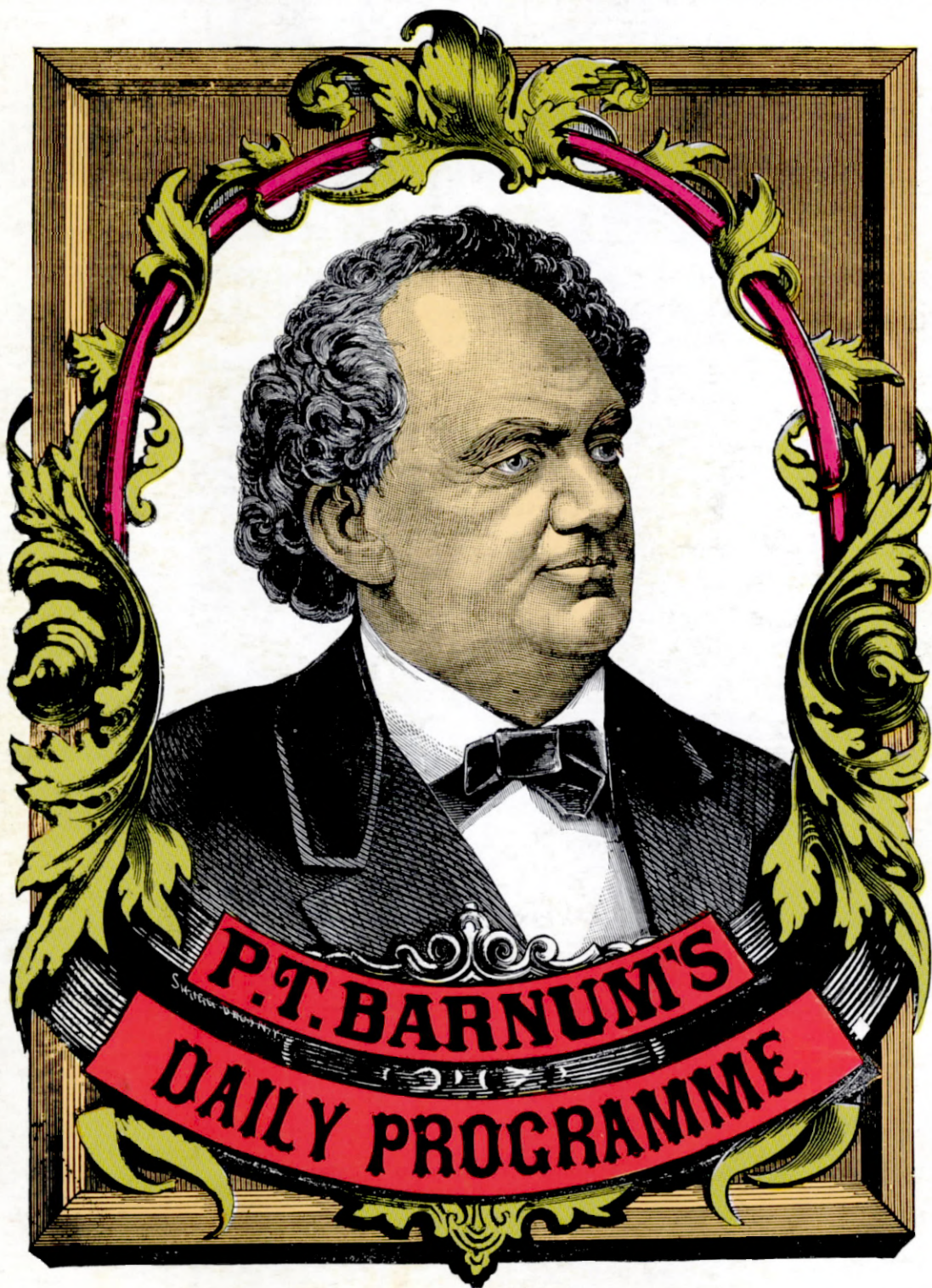


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Vol. 16, No. 2

March-April 1972

Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Editor

Joseph T. Bradbury, Fred D. Pfening, III Associate Editors

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THIS MONTH'S COVER

Our cover this issue goes back 94 years to the P. T. Barnum Greatest Show on Earth. This is the cover of the program used by the Barnum show in 1878. Only twenty acts are listed, 10 of which are horse numbers, riding, liberty and jumping.

The original is printed in red, green, black and tan. It is from the Pfening Collection.

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BETTY SCHMID

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DUES NOTICES IN MAIL

On April 1, 1972 dues and subscription notices were sent to all readers of the Bandwagon. The payment of \$8.00 will carry you until May 1, 1973.

Please mail the return envelope with your check or money order to Secretary-Treasurer Julian Jimenez as soon as possible.

CONVENTION PLANS PROGRESS Baraboo in 72

During March the convention committee consisting of Vice President Stuart Thayer, Chairman, Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Fred D. Pfening, III, Albert Conover and Bob Parkinson met in Baraboo, Wisconsin to firm up plans for the 1972 convention of the Circus Historical Society.

August 4 and 5, 1972 will be packed with a program of special historical papers presented by members, the viewing of motion pictures from the collection of the Circus World Museum and time for personal research. In addition Bob Parkinson will display the vast collection of lithographs in the library of the research center.

The activities will begin on the morning

of Friday August 4, so you should arrive on Thursday the 3rd. There will be a farmer's gathering in the Baraboo area at the same time so it is suggested that you write for motel reservations as soon as possible.

This will be a new kind of meeting for the CHS, one at which CIRCUS HISTORY will be the central theme. It will be most worthwhile to attend.

HALL OF FAME AWARDS ANNOUNCED

The Circus Hall of Fame, Sarasota, Florida, has announced it's awards for 1972. They were selected during a meeting of the awards committee held during the 1971 CFA convention in Atlantic City, N.J.

George Abou Hamid is the first in the history of the awards to be elected in all three selection categories - performer, maintenance and management.

Two individuals who have performed as clowns were selected. Pat Valdo, long time personnel director of the Ringling Barnum circus began as a clown and rider with the Walter L. Main Circus in 1902. In 1923 he became assistant to ring master Fred Bradna on the big show. In 1929 he

became personnel director of the big show and continued with it until 1968.

Felix Adler, often called king of the clowns, began his circus days with the Ringling show in 1909. He continued with the Ringling Barnum circus until his death in 1960.

Two animal trainers were honored. Jules Jacot joined the Sparks Circus at the age of 18 and began working with wild animals in 1912. In 1917 he appeared with the Yankee Robinson Circus and in the 1920s appeared with various shows owned by the American Circus Corporation. In later years he spent 25 seasons training and presenting wild animal acts at the St. Louis Zoo.

Capt. Jack Bonavita (John F. Gentner) was the featured trainer with the Bostock Carnival and later worked animals in jungle films made in Hollywood before being killed by a polar bear in 1917.

The "circus greats" were selected by the Hall of Fames National Awards Committee. Among those on the committee are the following CHS members: Herman J. Linden; Dr. H. H. Conley; Eric C. Wilson; Bette Leonard; Earl M. Allen, James B. Hoyer; Jack T. Painter; Clifford W. Glotzbach, J. Allen Duffield and Fred D. Pfening, Jr.



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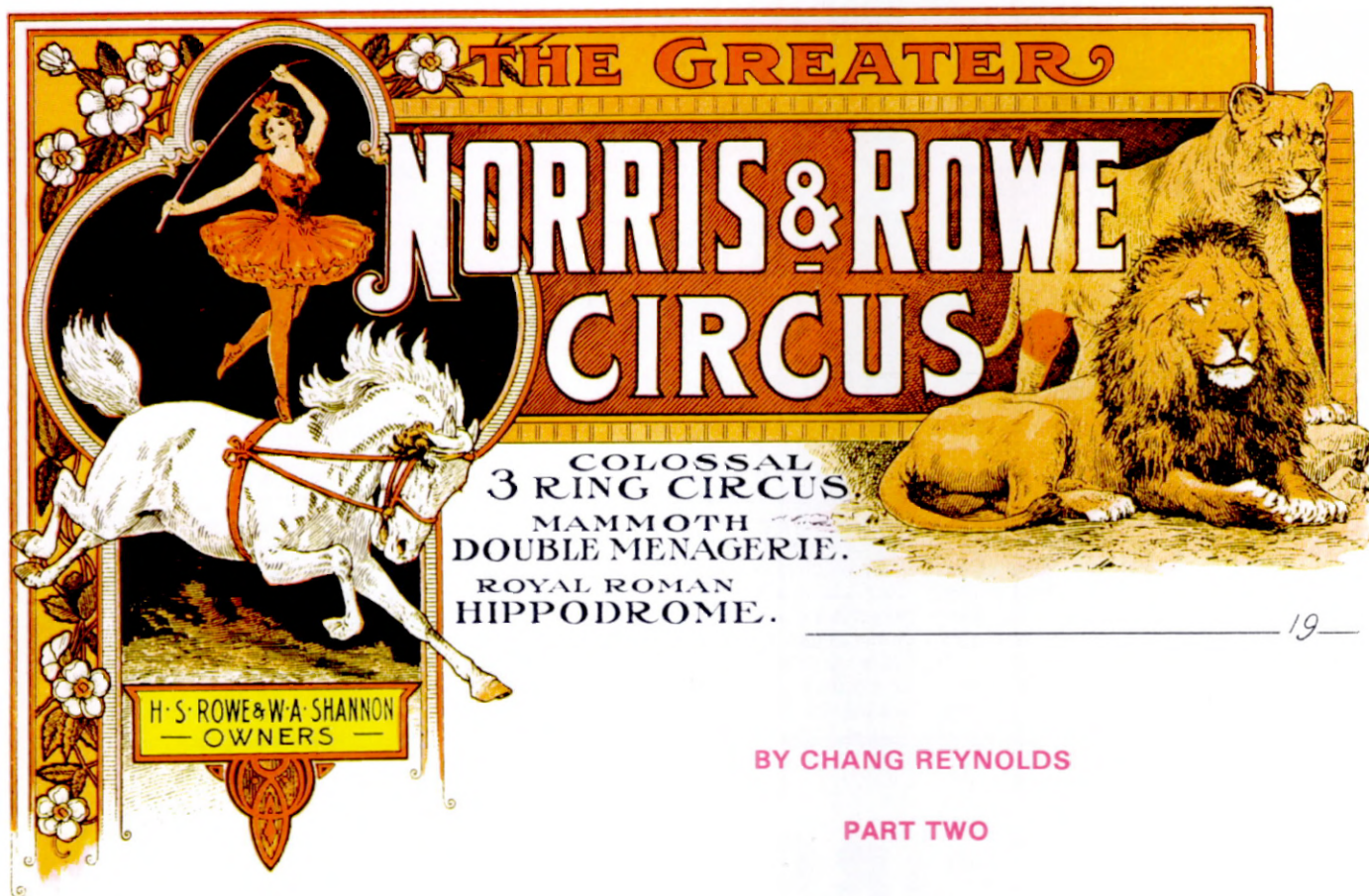
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BY CHANG REYNOLDS

PART TWO

The Santa Cruz *Morning Sentinel* carried several articles that expressed optimism about the growth of the Norris & Rowe Circus during the winter of 1906-1907. Plans for the expansion of the quarters at "Vue de L'Eau" were included with the news stories that told of the elaborate tour included in the 1907 arrangements. One article, on March 20, may have more truly indicated the actual state of affairs - it was headlined "Circus Men Defendants in Action Brought to Collect Bills." C. I. Norris and H. S. Rowe were defendants in a suit which "alleged that the showmen became indebted to the United States Tent and Awning Company of Chicago" for an account which became due May 1, 1906. The amount mentioned in the paper was small; under four hundred dollars and cost of the suit.

A new big top, delivered at quarters from Thompson & Vandiver of Cincinnati, was a 150 ft. with three 50 ft. middle pieces. The show was scheduled to travel on twenty-four cars with three in advance. The cars were painted white and lettered in red and black.

The performance maintained the same high standard of previous years. The riders were George Holland, Rose Dockrill, Edward V. Hocum, Gladys and Maude Hocum, Edna Maretta, Frank and Dolly Miller, Herbert Rumley, Frank O'Brien, and Harry Dutton. George

Holland and Rose Dockrill performed somersault, principal, two and four-horse carrying and menage riding. Edna Maretta presented a four-horse act. Dolly Miller was engaged for menage, two-horse carrying act, and high-school horses. Maude Hocum did a principal act and a double act with Edna Maretta while Gladys and Edward Hocum worked a carrying act. Frank O'Brien had the

H. S. Rowe and Walter Shannon the owners of the Norris & Rowe show are shown as they appeared in 1910 photos. Pfening Collection.



The above 1910 letterhead is one of the most beautiful ever used by a circus. The title is in white on a red background, the animals and rider are in full color. Pfening Collection.

mule hurdle and Herbert Rumley did trick and fancy riding. Carrie Demar and Ethel Myers rode menage. Frank Miller was equestrian director.

Other acts included the Newskyoff Troupe of Russian singers, dancers, and acrobats; the Leffel Trio, aerial bars; the Banvard Troupe, casting and flying return act; the Silbon Sisters, double trapeze; the Avallon-McDonald Troupe of bicyclists (Arthur "Pat" McDonald, his wife, Bob Montrose, Lillian Montrose, Bert Keno, and Ethel Myers); Irene Maretta, swinging ladders; the Montrose-Keno Troupe of acrobats; Hugh and Howard Melnotte, high wire; The Odessa Troupe, aerial horizontal bars; Mlle Celeste and the Hawthorne Sisters, contortion; Ethel Reno, revolving trapeze; the Rexos Brothers on unsupported ladders; Ben Lucier, Jacquely Drops, and the Melnotts on dancing ladders; Hazel Cahill and Jessie Smith, revolving trapeze. The clowns were Gary Vanderbilt, Tote Ducrow, Bob Deming, Wm. Tate, Bart Kenno, "Fat" Lawson, and Frank O'Brien. Leaps and hippodrome races concluded the program.

Animal acts included bears, llamas,

dogs, camels, and dromedaries. George Settler worked the three elephants and two troupes of dogs. C. I. Norris broke an act during the winter that consisted of a big black bear, two monkeys, a zebu, and a llama. Mlle. Rita worked a cage act that consisted of a lion, leopard, tiger, puma, and hyena. The camel-dromedary act used six of these animals and Herbert Rumley worked a fourteen pony drill.

H. S. Rowe and C. I. Norris were the proprietors. H. S. Rowe was manager. Ed. C. Warner, general agent and railroad contractor; James C. Stuart, local contractor; Josh Billings and T. J. Myers, special agents; C. G. Henry, checker-up; James H. Fitzpatrick, excursion agent; and Walter Shannon, and his long-time assistant, William Bradford, had the side show and privileges.

Featured in Shannon's operation were Prince Mungo; W. P. Doss, the human telescope; Princess Numa, midget; King Cole, magician and illusionist; Mrs. Cole, snakes; and the Randalls, sharp shooters.

Norris & Rowe, Sells-Floto, and the Great C. T. Burch Shows all opened in California in the spring of 1907. The Floto Show began at Santa Monica on April 4 while Norris and Rowe opened at Santa Cruz on Saturday, March 30. It played Monterey on Monday but had a late arrival at Hollister on Tuesday due to a bad track. One performance was given that day. The Wednesday stand at Redwood City was excellent for both performances, but Thursday at San Jose was disappointing. Friday at Berkeley was capacity on a wet day and Saturday at Alameda brought fine crowds.

The second week included an additional six mid-California stands and then Norris and Rowe headed north through Chico, Red Bluff, Redding, Suisun, and Montague. It understandably avoided the southern part of the state with the Floto Show active in that area. The fourth week of the season was played in Oregon and the outfit was in Walla Walla by May 10 with the profitable stands of Portland, Seattle, and the other western Washington towns still to come.

On the way from La Grande to Pendleton a flat car was derailed on a high bridge over a canyon. The flat car with its valuable cargo remained on the bridge, however, with its wheels six inches from the edge. As a result, the show arrived late in Pendleton. At Walla

CIRCUS DAY AT JERSEYVILLE, 1906 THURSDAY, AUGUST 30th

100 CIRCUS CHAMPIONS
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22 FAMOUS EQUESTRIANS
18 Daring Aerialists
23 MERRY CLOWNS

Le Fleur Troupe
11 Arabian Tumblers
Celebrated
Stirk (10) Family
10 Hottest Rough Riders
100 SHOTLAND PONY BALLETS
METROVILLE PICARDS
7 Russian Cossacks
SUPERIOR GARLAND ENTREE

500 PEOPLE
350 HORSES
MUSEUM
Double Menagerie
Real Roman Hippodrome
Scores of Trained Wild Beasts
Pretty **EDNA MARETTA**
The Great Seal & Sea Lions
A COMPLETE JAPANESE CIRCUS
9 SENSATIONAL EQUESTRIANS
Only Lady Jugglers Artists in America
201 Astonishing "Acrobats"
HIGHEST JUMPING HORSES
HEADS-PERFORMING ELEPHANTS
CAMELS, LLAMAS AND BOB INDIGOS
CAMEL WALKING HORSES
TRAINED IMPORTED ARABIAN STALLIONS

Grand STREET PARADE 10:30 DAILY

Performances at 2 and 8 P. M.

The title design used in this 1906 newspaper ad was also used in a newspaper herald. Circus World Museum Collection.

Walla, on an afternoon with pouring rain, the new canvas blew down, and the crowd stood around in the downpour hoping it could be erected again. Unfortunately, about half of the working force had quit the show upon arrival in town and with no experienced men available the top did not go up for an afternoon performance. Only the side show was in use. The California outfit did make parade, however, and the calliope was mentioned in the news story in *The Evening Statesman*.

Several stands were made in Idaho, and the show returned to Washington to play Spokane, North Yakima, Ellensburg, and Roslyn on its way to Portland. After that successful three-day stand it moved to South Bend, Aberdeen, and Tacoma before entering Seattle for three more days. At Tacoma it was three hours late in arriving and the parade left the

This fine tableau wagon carried Percy Lowery's side show band in the parade. Photo taken in 1909 at Ukiah, Calif. Pfening Collection.

lot at twelve-thirty. The afternoon performance began at three-thirty.

There were turnaways at each night show in Seattle according to reports from the show and everything went smoothly except for a problem concerning the license. According to a report in *The Seattle Star* license prices were \$300 per day for shows charging over fifty cents admission and \$200 per day for show charging less than that price. Norris & Rowe charged the public forty-nine cents and saved \$100 per day - or so the owners thought. However, by Friday, the city officials did not view this action with approval and ordered the circus to pay \$100 each for Thursday and Friday, and \$300 for Saturday. The alternative was "Get Out Of Town!"

This action on the part of the circus management is scarcely understandable. Seattle, and really the entire Northwest, had always accepted the Norris & Rowe Show with a generous welcome and had turned out by the thousands to patronize their performances. The record of turnaways in that area over the years is astounding. To try to save \$300 at the expense of losing the good-will of the Seattle city government and gaining the ridicule of its patrons seems hardly worth the effort. However, the economic-political events of 1907 were well underway and may have been hurting the show to a far greater extent than can be realized from this point in time.

The outfit was soon in British Columbia after the Seattle stand, and was commenting on the unheard of record for excellent weather along the Pacific Coast. It had experienced only one day of rain in twelve weeks. The Sells-Floto Circus also reported very favorable weather on its spring tour of California, but circuses east of the Rocky Mountains reported the worst weather conditions in many years. As the *Billboard* correspondent noted, "This unprecedented record is in extreme contrast to our experience of last season (1906) when during the same period, we were confronted by a combination of most adverse conditions imaginable, including almost incessant rain and wind storms, blowdowns, washouts, railroad wrecks, and finally the terrible San Francisco earthquake which paralyzed business for two weeks."

Vancouver, B.C. was the last stand on



It moved through Kansas and Missouri with poor business at many stands and reached Raton, New Mexico on October 22. Arizona and southern California dates followed with opposition from the Sells-Floto Circus which had returned to that area in preparation for entering

The 1908 tour opened on January 11 with a long indoor stand in San Francisco. This ended on February 1, and the outfit returned to Santa Cruz to accomplish the last minute preparations for the tenting tour. It opened under canvas on March 18 at Santa Cruz. The tour followed the usual route; mid-California stands with a run north through Chico, Red Bluff, and Redding brought the show to Oregon by April 27. Oregon and Washington dates followed through mid-June with Vancouver, B.C. on the 22d. With the exception of a derailment which caused a late arrival in Seattle all was moving smoothly; parades were on time; weather conditions were, for the most

"Pop" Smith was the leader on this band on the Norris & Rowe show, year unknown. Woodcock Collection.

[illegible]

This 1907 herald featured such well known circus names as, George Holland, and Rose Dockrill riders, Frank Miller, the Hocums and the Avallon Family bicycle riders. Pfening Collection.

After the Vancouver date the Norris & Rowe Circus turned back to Washington to finish the week of June 22-27, and used the following Sunday to run to Sand Point, Idaho, where one performance was given on Monday. The usual Canadian tour was dispensed with probably because Campbell Bros. Circus had toured the principal towns of Saskatchewan and Alberta in late June, and the



newly formed 101 Ranch Show had covered much the same territory about a week later. Therefore, Norris & Rowe chose to move into Montana early in July and the show was in Butte on July 3. Flooding and washouts, the result of days of torrential downpour, forced the show to remain in Butte on the Fourth of July even though the 101 Ranch Wild West Show was billed there for that day. The bronco busters and bulldoggers lost their afternoon performance at Great Falls on the 3rd because of flooding and did not reach Butte until four o'clock. As the Miller-Arlington outfit pulled into town they were greeted by an unusual sight - the Norris & Rowe baggage stock and train crew waiting to help them unload. On the lot, which Norris & Rowe had just vacated that morning, was the canvas crew of the "Pride of the West" waiting to assist the ranch outfit with the erection of the show's canvas. All this enabled the "horse opera" to provide a night performance in Butte.

for the aid given, and in conclusion wished the California outfit "nothing but turn-away business which they deserve. Such courtesies extended from one show to another under like conditions are what make the hand grasp of true showmen..."

At least with a good deed, behind them, if not financial rewards from the patrons of Butte, the Norris & Rowe Show moved by a devious route (caused by the high waters) through Montana and into British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. It was crossing these provinces about a month later than the Campbell Bros. Edmonton, Alberta, for example, was played on June 24 by the Campbell Bros. show; June 29 by the 101 Ranch; and on July 22 by Norris & Rowe.

The California show entered Minnesota on August 7, moved to North Dakota, and returned to Montana during that same month. It was in Idaho in late August and Colorado (where it was blown-down at Buena Vista) during the first two weeks of September. New Mexico,

Archie Donaldson (of the Donaldson Lithograph Company), and W. W. Shannon, the concessions and side show operator. A further rumor was included that Norris had visited the Frank Adams Southern Show at Irvington, Calif., which he had been asked to manage; or, the rumor continued, he would purchase it and combine it with the rather tarnished "Pride of the West."

On November 27, Hutton S. Rowe acknowledged the inability of the firm to pay its debts and its willingness to be declared bankrupt. The total amount of its liabilities were in excess of \$50,000.

On December 1 the creditors of the Norris & Rowe Show filed a petition in bankruptcy. However, a reporter from the *Morning Sentinel*, who attempted to get the facts from H. S. Rowe at "Vue De L'Eau" found that the manager denied that the show had changed hands and that there was no possibility of such an occurrence before the first of the year. Rowe did not conceal the fact that the



A long time feature of the Norris & Rowe parades was this highly carved pony tab pulled by a camel. This 1909 photo was taken by Charles Puck.

The Norris & Rowe correspondent writing to *Billboard*, noted, "We had it 'handed to us' in original packages in the beautiful (?) city of Butte, July 3. We encountered big parades in celebration of the 'ever glorious' but business was poor." He mentioned that the show was compelled to remain in town and that the 101 Ranch was scheduled to exhibit on the Fourth "consequently we were compelled to change lots. The business was very poor. Miller Bros. did not arrive until late in the afternoon, but got up in time for the night show, and they turned them away." Not a word was mentioned about the valuable assistance extended to the cowboys.

On the other hand, the 101 Ranch correspondent was voluble in his thanks

Oklahoma, and Arizona dates followed. Interspersed were two Texas stands; Amarillo on September 24 and Dalheart on October 5. From Tombstone, Arizona, the show went into Old Mexico for four stands and then returned to Nogales. Southern California dates finished the season with the last date at Salinas on November 7. All in all, it was a meandering route that wound in and out of the far western and Rocky Mountain states - a route that indicated a lack of direction and assurance that had usually characterized the movements of this circus in the past. It also certainly avoided the eastern territory which had not recovered from the financial uncertainty of the previous year.

On November 20, the Santa Cruz *Morning Sentinel* declared that a rumor was prevalent that Norris & Rowe's Circus would incorporate with a capital stock of \$100,000. The principal stockholders were to be C. I. Norris, H. S. Rowe,



Stick Davenport a well known rider of the early 1900s is shown in this photo, the short bandwagon is in the background. Woodcock Collection.

1908 season had been very unprofitable, but would not concede that the finances of the organization had gotten beyond possible correction.

The reporter interviewed Clarence Norris who stated that there was a chance that his connection with the show would be "entirely severed by any sale that might take place." Norris commented that "although he was the founder of the circus, he was not financially in a position to be positive of being able to retain ownership of it."

By the first of the year, 1909, the show management had filed a schedule which showed liabilities of \$57,873 of which \$5,555 was for wages; \$29,987 secured debts; and the balance unsecured.

The entire circus was valued at \$60,725.

The principal creditors were R. A. Shannon, \$10,000; Donaldson Lithograph Company \$19,978; McStay Supply Company \$2,000; McDonald Family \$1,065; and Schrade Brothers \$1,635. The entire outfit was to be sold at auction by the Bankruptcy Court.

The value of a circus at the end of 1908 is difficult to assess. It certainly cannot be judged by the financial structure of today, but the prices of over sixty years ago, at the end of the crisis of that period, are difficult to estimate. Some emphasis is placed on this fact because historians have different opinions about the condition and quality of the Norris & Rowe equipment before its final sale in 1910. Some believe it was, in general, a decrepit, run-down outfit. Others think that it must have been a fairly well-equipped show even before the addition of the Leonhardt wagons in the winter of 1909-10. Perhaps a list of assets provided by *Billboard*, January 2, 1909, will give some indication.

Two advance cars	\$4,000
Three sleepers	6,500
One elephant car	800
Four stock cars	3,300
Three tableau band wagons	1,800
One steam calliope	1,000
Twelve animal cages	2,400
Forty-one baggage horses	4,100
Thirty-two Shetland ponies	3,200
Three Shetland colts	150
Wardrobe including band uniforms, tournament and entire costumes, trappings for elephants, camels, etc.	1,000
Four elephants	6,000
Four lions	1,500
One lioness	500
Two tigers	1,500
Eight camels	2,600
Ten performing dogs	500
One trick mule	50

On January 29, 1909 the Norris & Rowe Circus was sold at auction under the order of the court. Joseph I. Geisler, formerly treasurer of the show, had been appointed custodian of the property and conducted the sale. Archie Donaldson, of the Donaldson Lithograph Company, Newport, Kentucky, bid \$15,000 and was awarded the entire property. The Donaldson Company, previous to the sale, purchased claims against the company to the amount of \$50,000, making its total investment \$65,000. *The Morning Sentinel*, reporting this auction, also indicated that the lithograph company would, within a day or two, transfer all the property to Hutton S. Rowe who would continue as general manager.

In early February it was reported in *Billboard* and other papers that H. S. Rowe was the sole owner of the Norris & Rowe Circus. This, apparently, was only through the courtesy of the Donaldson Lithograph Co. *The Morning Sentinel* reported that the train of twenty-one cars moved to the Southern Pacific repair shops at Sacramento on February 4, and the process of overhaul for the

summer tour was under way. (Note: the list of assets in *Billboard* only accounted for half of these cars. No flat cars were mentioned in the list.)

The season opened at Santa Cruz on March 11 and that night the orange and purple train pulled out for Watsonville. These were the last hours that the Norris & Rowe Circus were to spend at the winter quarters at "Vue De L'Eau." The show travelled to eight stands in southern California before returning to the central part of the state by way of the San Joaquin Valley.



This unusual wagon is the uptown pit show carried by the show. It is pictured here on a Norris & Rowe lot around 1909. McClintock Collection.

R. H. Dockrill was equestrian director. He had filled that position in 1908, also. Riders were George Holland, Rose Dockrill, Dave and Ada Costello, George Holland, Sr., The Prince Luca Troupe of Cossacks, the Ortons, Jessica Cahill, Grace Kalb and Ethel Myers. Aerial features included the Six Peerless Potters, the Three Nevadas, the French Sisters, the Diamonds, the Miller Trio, the Veronas, and the Ortons.

Novelty and acrobat numbers featured Volten-Schenk Troupe; Ben Lucier; Foster Glasscock and wife; Ten Baker Troupe; Merritt Belew; Melnotte and La Nole; R. A. Dooley; Kelly Troupe; the Hollaways; the Delevats; Mack, Sylvester and Mack; the Nelson Brothers; and Bronson's Living Statues. Clowns were William Crooks, Sam B. Nelson, Jack De Van, and Ben Le Roy.

An equestrian tournament opened the performance and hippodrome races closed it. Animal acts included Alex Glasscock and his troupe of elephants; John Isell's six elephants; and Dooley Orton with his trio of pachyderms. Chris Zeitz worked one of the elephant acts. These "bulls" plus the Norris & Rowe group gave the show a very large herd for the 1909 season. But, then, the whole performance was strengthened considerably, or at least was as strong as those of recent years; this in spite of financial difficulties.

Z. L. Bronson was musical director of the Number One band and William Prewcott of the second band. Alonso Turner had charge of the side show band. W. J. Long was train supt.; Max French, boss canvasman; John Isell, menagerie; Arthur Davis, the cook house; Al Henderson, master of properties; and Thos. H. Ryan was lot supt. Walter Shannon was in charge of privileges. Harry Moore and Ralph Hayward were in the big show ticket wagon and Tom J. Myers had charge of press back with the show. He was also auditor and account-

ant. In advance, were E. L. Brennan, Steve Woods, Sam Haller, William Gilliam, and E. P. Norwood. Harry Graham was in charge of Car #1 and Geo. S. Roddy had the second advance car.

Ben Bowman was in charge of the side show with Lou Weick in charge of its canvas. In the annex were the Musical Smiths; South Sea Island Joe and wife; Montana Jack and Maritans; Liza Davis; Hornman, magician; La Belle Carmen; M'lle Agnes, mind reading; Jennie LeClair, Gertrude Coghlan, Jennie Carlisle and Evie Stetson, all dancers.

The season's route followed the usual dates of the past years during April and May. The northwestern states of Oregon, Idaho, and Washington bearing the burden of the schedule after the show left California on April 24.

In May the *Portland Oregonian* related the actions of seven employees who took legal action to collect salaries due them. A total of \$540 was paid so that the show, which had been attached, could leave town at the close of the evening performance on May 4. *Billboard* reported that a new big top would be delivered at Portland. It was to be a 160 ft. round top with four 50 ft. middle pieces. Under it would be placed new seating - thirty lengths of high-back reclining reserve seats.

From Vancouver, B.C. the show rolled over its familiar route through Vernon and Salmon Arm and Revelstoke. Calgary and McCleod were lost due to a washout. Several stands in the Dakotas filled the period from mid-June until the end of the

month. Wisconsin, a couple of Michigan towns, and a week at Milwaukee preceded a return to Canada at Sault Ste. Marie. The show went as far east as New Brunswick and Nova Scotia before turning west (still in Quebec and Ontario) to make its return to the United States at Montpelier, Ohio, on September 10. Seven weeks were spent in touring through Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri before the show closed at Booneville, Indiana, on October 28. The now faded purple and orange trains moved to the next scheduled stand, Evansville, but instead of giving performances went into quarters at the Tri-State Fairgrounds. Henderson, Kentucky, also on the schedule for October 30, was cancelled.

On the evening of October 22 at Princeton, Indiana, during the night performance, a high wind began to tear at the canvas. Rowe ordered the performance cut short, but just as the last act was in its final moments and people were leaving their seats, the tent lifted like a balloon, jerked at ropes and poles, and collapsed on to the 1500 people. Fortunately nobody was seriously injured but the top was slashed in many places as people cut their way to freedom. The report in the Princeton *Clarion News* states that the circus was made up of "twenty-three railroad cars, four elephants, seven camels, and fourteen cages of wild animals." This would indicate that several of the elephant acts had not remained during the season and, without a doubt there had been other departures by performers who had started the tour in California.



It is difficult to evaluate the success, if any, of this season's effort. The circus had been out one day more than thirty-three weeks and had certainly covered a great deal of territory. There is the attachment by the employees early in the season to consider, and also the Santa Cruz newspapers of the period indicate that the show would have been welcome in that town as a winter resident if it could have reached the Pacific Coast. Early in November it was announced in *Billboard* that Walter A. Shannon had purchased one-half interest in the Norris & Rowe Circus and that he would become manager, while H. S. Rowe would continue as General Manager and devote his time to the advance. This evidence, also, might indicate a strained financial position.

However, the organization was strong enough financially to warrant the fulfilling of an order by the William Leonhardt Wagon Works of Baltimore for four "bandwagons" to be delivered in the early spring of 1910. These were the well-known Blue, Green, White, and Battleship Tableau Wagons. Leonhardt also constructed three animal dens which were sent to the show that spring and were in use during the very short period that the Norris & Rowe Show was on the road that year. Aside from these seven wagons, which no doubt were a very attractive addition, the rest of the equipment had been in use during the previous seasons. However, an attempt to compare the vehicles listed in the 1910 auction book with the equipment listed in the 1908 bankruptcy list would indicate that the Norris & Rowe Show had received, or rebuilt, several pieces for the 1909 season.

The elephant herd was decimated during the winter of 1909-1910. Three animals were disposed of during the winter; three destroyed by Chris Zeitz because of incurable illness or intractable tempers. However, in spite of the small elephant herd, the Norris & Rowe Show opened on April 15, 1910 as a really fine outfit. The seven new wagons did much to create this appearance of brilliance without a doubt. Looks did not deceive the patrons and the show was taken over by creditors and closed at Newport, Kentucky, on May 9. The Peru Trust Company held the note so the show was brought to the Hagenbeck-Wallace quarters at Peru, Indiana, to be sold at auction to satisfy the claims against it.

The number one advance car carried 14 men in 1909. The center loading door is typical of the period. McClintock Collection.

A peculiar incident of the sale is that three separate auctions were held in order to dispose of the property. At the first auction, held early in June, a large part of the circus equipment and stock were purchased by Walter Shannon, who was backed by H. E. Brotherton of Ashtabula, Ohio. At the end of the period of time allotted by the court for the purchase money to be paid, Shannon acknowledged his inability to raise the necessary funds and forfeited the \$3,000 guarantee which he had put up as a deposit.

A second sale was held and again Mr.

Shannon appeared as a bidder, and was announced as the purchaser of the equipment for the sum of \$15,000 plus the \$3,000 guarantee which he had deposited. The court ruled against this sale and Shannon and Brotherton appeared to be ready to lose a large part of the \$18,000. However, the third sale on August 6 brought a sufficient sum to pay off the debts incurred in quartering the show during the time it had been held at Peru and to satisfy the chief creditors. Shannon and Brotherton lost about \$6,000 by their action according to a *Billboard* report.

As indicated, the court ordered the third sale for August 6, 1910 at the trustee's office in Peru, Indiana to satisfy a debt of \$25,626.50. At this sale B. E. Wallace, J. Augustus Jones, Edward Arlington, Bert McClaim (for W. P. Hall), and Danny Robinson were the purchasers. Their financial standing guaranteed the prompt settling of accounts and also insured that the Norris & Rowe Show had passed from the entertainment world forever.

The Richard Conover library has a copy of the Auction Book of the Norris & Rowe Circus and it was with his generosity that this writer was allowed to make some notes of the most important features of the August 6 sale.

- 1 Male Elephant (Hero);
- 1 Female Elephant (Dutchess);
- 1 Llama, male;
- 1 Black Bear, male;
- 2 Bengal Tigers (male & female);
- 1 Badger;
- 1 Monkey;
- 1 Giant Dromedary;
- 2 Dromedaries;
- 4 Camels;
- 1 Hyena, male;
- 2 Black-maned African Lions;
- 1 Zebu, Male;
- 1 Elk, Male;
- 1 Fallow Deer, white, male;
- 1 Jaguar;
- 1 Pair of young lions;
- 1 Lioness.

Baggage and Ring Stock

70 (approx.) head of baggage stock

Queen, Menage horse, broken to 4-horse cart; Laddie, Arabian, 4-horse act and chariot race; Shiek, Arabian, menage, broken to 4-horse act; Colonel, principal horse, broken to 4-horse act; Cricket, finish horse, broken to 4-horse act; Tom, bare-back, principal horse; Prince, chariot horse; Ping, High jumping horse; Pong, High jumping horse; Johnny, saddle horse; Diamond, race horse; Nigger, race horse; Ragtime, race horse; Lady, broken to Roman standing race; Dexter, race horse; Bill, broken to 4-horse act; John D., menage horse, stud; King, menage horse, stud; Earl, menage horse; Indian, race horse; Black Lady, menage horse; Bad Eye, broncho race horse; 10 Ponies broken to drill; 9 Ponies; 1 Trained Mule;

Train

Advance Car #1; Advance Car #3



(Boiler, etc.); Sleeping Car #5 (6 wheel trucks); Sleeping Car #6 (6 wheel trucks); Sleeping Car #7 (6 wheel trucks); Privilege Car #8 (6 wheel trucks); State Room Car #6 (4 wheel trucks); Sleeping Car #9 (6 wheel trucks); Stock Car #16; Stock Car #11; Stock Car #12 (large); Stock Car #14; Flat Cars #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11.

Wagons, Carts, etc.

2 Clown wagons; 1 English Cart; 1 Calash; 2 Racing Chariots; 9 cages - #15, 16, 18, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, and 31; 1 Animal Den - #26; Cook House Wagon - #1; Cook House Wagon - # (with refrigerator); Stake & Chain Wagon - #54; Pole Wagon - #65; Canvas Wagon - #61; Canvas Wagon; Menagerie Canvas Wagon - #5; Jack Wagon; Stringer Wagon - #63; Plank Wagon; Property Wagon - #59; Property Wagon - #60; Chandelier Wagon; Stable Wagon - #62; Ticket Wagon; Tableau Band Wagon - #4; Tableau Band Wagon - #5; Tableau Band Wagon #6; 3 Animal Dens - #24, 31 and 32. (Manufactured by Leonhardt Wagon Co., have been used less than three weeks.); Uptown Show Wagon; Blue Tableau Wagon; Green Tableau Wagon; White Tableau Wagon; Battle Ship Tableau Wagon; Steam Calliope, 37 whistles, mfgd. by Geo. Kratz, Evansville, Ind.

Lot #14	6-24 Lights-Bolts and System Complete	Weyer
Lot #15	2-12 Lights-Bolts and System Complete	Weyer
Lot #16	3-16 Lights-Bolts and System Complete	Weyer
Lot #17	1- 4 Lights-Bolts and System Complete	Weyer
Lot #18	1 Kid Beacon light	

This fine stand of paper for the Ukiah, California, 1908 stand featured the photos of both Hutton S. Rowe and Clarence I. Norris. McClintock Collection.

Lot #19	2 Small pan lights
Lot #20	4 Air pumps
Lot #21	3 Gasoline cans and two funnels
Lot #22	7 Boxes of mantles, 200 in box
Lot #23	150 gal. oil can
Lot #24	1 Blow Torch
Lot #25	67 dozen rag mantles for inverted burners
Lot #26	2 Stake pullers
Lot #27	4 Iron wheels for stake pullers
Lot #28	1 Sectional platform
Lot #29	30 Lengths of blue seats, 12 tiers high
Lot #30	8 Lengths of star-back reserve seats
Lot #31	10 Lengths of grand stand with 635 chairs.

While the above listing is not complete it does give an indication of the equipment present on the show in 1910. The Auction Book was dated June 11, 1910. B. E. Wallace, while not making the biggest purchase, secured a greater number of articles than Jones, Arlington, Hall, or Robinson. The purchase of these men, as listed in *Billboard*, 13 August 1910, are listed below for those readers interested in comparing the various items with the Catalog of Sale, or the 1908 inventory. B. E. Wallace's Purchases

Although this advance car is lettered no. 3, no records show that the Norris & Rowe Circus had more than two bill cars. Photo taken in 1909. McClintock Collection.

Candy Stand Outfit	\$ 3.00
23 Lead Bars	8.00
2 Stake Pullers	4.00
8 lengths Star Back Reserves	5.00
Cooking Outfit to feed 300	10.00
1 set of Six Harness	5.00
1 set of Four Harness	5.00
4 Main Top Center Poles	10.00
5 Menagerie Center Poles	3.00
3 Horse Tent Center Poles	1.00
2 Dressing Room Center Poles	1.00
12 Dressing Room Banner Poles	1.00
9 Large Flags	2.00
1 Dromedary	170.00
1 Male Zebu	55.00
2 Bengal Tigers	510.00
2 Black-maned African Lions	150.00
1 Pair Young Lions, 4 years old	150.00
Cage No. 16	20.00
Cage No. 31	20.00
Pole Wagon No. 65	10.00
Animal Den No. 26	50.00
Menagerie Canvas Wagon No. 5	10.00
Cook House Wagon No. 1	10.00
Cook House Wagon No. 2	10.00
Stringer Wagon No. 63	10.00
Chandelier Wagon	10.00
Stable Wagon No. 62	50.00
Tableau Wagon No. 4	260.00
Animal Den No. 24	25.00
Prince, bay horse	40.00
Dutch, black horse	210.00
Queen, menage horse	125.00
Laddie, Arabian horse	135.00
Lady, Roman Standing Race horse	70.00
Wallace's Total	\$2,178.00
W. P. Hall's Purchases	
One set Six Harness	10.00
One set Double Harness	3.00
One set Double Harness	2.00
One set Single Harness	2.00
Male elephant, Hero	1,050.00



Female elephant, Dutchess	1,250.00
One camel	135.00
One camel	70.00
Tableau Band Wagon	185.00
Animal Den No. 31	120.00
Blue Tableau Wagon	450.00
Green Tableau Wagon	450.00
White Tableau Wagon	500.00
Battleship Tableau Wagon	50.00
Dapple Gray Mare	120.00
Iron Gray Horse	140.00
Dapple Gray Horse	160.00
Dark Dapple Horse	145.00
Iron Gray Horse	155.00
Black Horse	155.00
Black Horse	150.00
Iron Gray Horse	165.00
Bay Horse	175.00
Bay Horse	5.00
Steel Gray Horse	175.00
Dapple Gray Horse	160.00
Black Horse	85.00
John, White Horse	70.00
George, Gray Horse	85.00
King, Black Horse	135.00
Princess, Brown Mare	60.00
Frank, Gray Horse	60.00
Miles, Gray Horse	50.00
King, Menage Horse (stud) ..	100.00
Hall's Total	\$6,677.00
Edward Arlington's Purchases	
20 Hickory pieces for single trees	1.00
1 Set Six Horse Harness (new) ..	75.00
Ticket Wagon	260.00
Kratz Steam Calliope, 37 whistles	680.00
Arlington's Total	\$1,016.00
J. Augustus Jones' Purchases	
400 stakes, banded and sharpened	6.00
10 Body Poles	4.00
1 set, Six Horse Harness (new) ..	85.00
Mischief, bay Mare	45.00
19 Ponies and one trained mule	400.00
Earl, menage horse	160.00
Jones' Total	\$700.00
Danny Robinson's Purchases	
5 bunches of Laying-out Pins	5.00
1 Male Llama	100.00
1 Calash	25.00
1 Cash Register	10.00
Robinson's Total	\$140.00



These three tableau bandwagons were built for the show during the winter of 1909-1910 by the William Leonhardt Wagon Works of Baltimore, Md. and were used only by Norris & Rowe during its short 1910 tour. This photo was taken in 1913 when they were on the Miller & Arlington 101 Ranch Wild West Show. Woodcock Collection.

The prices paid at this sale were considerably lower than those of the first two auctions. The reader should note the amount paid by Wallace for cages and wagons of which he obtained several for ten and twenty dollars. At the June 11 sale Shannon purchased the two elephants for \$3,250.00 while Hal obtained the pair at the August sale for \$2,300.00. The railroad cars were sold in the afternoon of August 6 and the entire number brought only \$2,730. J. Augustus Jones obtained the privilege car for \$410.00 and Danny Robinson got a sleeper for \$300.00. Wallace and Hall bought the rest.

Most circus collections have little in the way of photographic material definitely attributed to the Norris & Rowe Circus. Where photographs are

This is probably the best photo available of the Norris & Rowe Circus. The big top appears to be new. A horse tent and a dressing room tent are at the far right of the photo. It is unusual to see part of the train parked next to the lot. Two of the three stock cars are shown with the single large elephant car at the end of the train. The show moved on a total of 23 cars - 2 advance; 6 sleepers; 4 stock cars and 11 flats. McClintock Collection.

available there seems to be a dearth of wagons depicted. Most early photos of the show indicate some cottage type vehicles with pony teams. Some of these apparently were in use well into the middle of the first decade of this century. This miniature equipment was planned for a parade which was designed to attract children and their parents to a program featuring small animals. It was also limited in size in order to load on a train of two or three cars.

Later, as the show enlarged, standard sized vehicles were added to give the show an appearance of a more normal circus operation. While many historians have concluded that there was nothing on the way of equipment until the shipment from Leonhardt, the outfit did have some well-constructed, interesting wagons.

Billboard, on October 1, 1904, announced that the Norris & Rowe Show had recently purchased a calliope and two dens and added another flat car. This undoubtedly is the calliope which figured so strongly in the newspaper articles describing the parade in 1905, and the years to follow. This is probably the calliope that is featured in the well-known photograph taken in Mexico City in 1906 and is supposed to be a Sullivan & Eagle production. It, also, in a remodeled version, was the 101 Ranch calliope of 1910-1912. Whether Sullivan & Eagle ever delivered a calliope at an earlier date as indicated by the Clipper note of 1902 is unknown to this writer. Certainly it never was featured by the press as was the 1904 delivery.

Three tableau bandwagons, it will be remembered, were listed in the 1908





inventory, and were also included in the 1910 Auction Book. These bore the numbers 4, 5, and 6. Number 4 was purchased by B. E. Wallace and W. P. Hall purchased another, while the third is not accounted for in the sale. Two of these wagons may have been equipment familiar to circus historians. One is a tableau with decorations including a dragon with wings and mirrors; the second has a design of a flying, winged-horse with a fish tail facing a central mirror. Charles Puck took a photo on 19 March 1906 of the latter tableau on the opening day of Los Angeles stand. Nine members of the sideshow band are aboard.

Of course, the three best known of the Norris & Rowe vehicles are those delivered by Leonhardt for the 1910 season and with only three weeks on the road went to Peru and then to W. P. Hall. What the new owner did with them, if anything, is not known until he disposed of them to the 101 Ranch Real Wild West Show for the 1913 season. At any rate this

trio of tableau wagons were the finest that the Norris & Rowe Show ever owned. It is regrettable that the show didn't have the use of them for a longer period of time. Perhaps some historian will locate some additional photographs of the equipment belonging to this circus and they will be published so that a better coverage of the vehicles can be obtained. At the present time there are several photos in circulation that are marked "Norris & Rowe" but which illustrate equipment that was probably not on the show.

The careers of Clarence I. Norris and Hutton S. Rowe following the 1910 de-

The first auction of the Norris & Rowe equipment held on June 11, 1910 attracted the largest number of showman since the famous Forepaugh Sells auction of 1905. They are shown gathered here in the Peru quarters. Left to right are Andrew Donaldson, Walter Shannon, J. P. Mundy, A. S. Mundy, James Patterson, O. J. Bailey (Donaldson), R. M. Harvey,, Un-

The best known of the "Blue, Green and White" tableaux is this one shown on the Howe's Great London Shows in 1921. Purchased by W. P. Hall on August 6, 1910, it was stored at the Hall Lancaster, Mo. quarters in 1911 and 1912. Early in 1913 it was then sold with the other two to the 101 Ranch. The wagon was on the Ranch through the 1916 season. It was on the Jess Willard-Buffalo Bill Wild West in 1917 and was sold to the Horne Zoological Arena Co. in 1918. Horne in turn sold it to Fred Buchanan and it was on the Yankee Robinson show in 1919 and 1920. It went to Mugivan and Bowers in the fall of 1920 with the rest of the Yank show. In 1921 it was on their Howes Great London and in 1922 was on Gollmar Bros. It appeared on John Robinson in 1923 and 1924 and perhaps 1925. It was probably lost in a Peru fire in 1926. Pfening Collection.

bacle have been well documented in the *Billboards* of the period. Norris, according to a report in the Santa Cruz *Morning Sentinel* was contemplating a return to a dog and pony show operation in 1909, if he could locate the financing. The January 25, 1913, *Billboard* carried a large photo of him with the notice that he was leaving his vaudeville act in New York and reporting to Venice, California, to accept a position as General Agent and Traffic Manager for Al G. Barnes. The act, known as Norris' Baboons, would continue in vaudeville. Bob Taber reports that Norris was "on the Foley & Burke Carnival in 1915 with a Rhesus monkey show." In 1920, Norris and his son, Cal, toured with the Barnes Show with performing baboons and in

known, Ben Wallace, I. M. Southern, Walter L. Main, Arch M. Donaldson, Al Martin, John T. Warren, Theo. Cocren (Donaldson), Col. W. M. Donaldson, J. P. Fagan (H-W), J. J. Weyer (Bolt & Weyer) and Walter L. Driver (US Tent). Four of the Norris & Rowe baggage wagons are in the background. Original cabinet photo from Pfening Collection.





The high skyboard Leonhardt tableaux are shown here behind the bidders at the June 11, 1910 auction. Pfening Collection.

December 1922 it was announced in *Billboard* that the Norris & Rowe Circus and Wild Animal Show would take to the road in wagons from San Diego. This outfit was scheduled to carry eighty head of stock and approximately half-a-hundred people. It was organized by Harry Payne, manager of the Spreckels Theater in San Diego and C. I. Norris.

H. S. Rowe made the trip to Australia and the Hawaiian Islands with Bud Atkinson's Circus and Wild West in the winter of 1912 and early spring of 1913. He, and sixteen others, returned to San Francisco on April 25 after a disappointing tour of the Pacific. Rowe joined the Young Buffalo Show upon his return. Bob Taber reports that Rowe was active in a wagon show called Norris & Rowe

that departed its Richmond, California, quarters in 1914. It made a short, unsuccessful tour. In the following seasons Rowe toured with Irwin's Wild West, the Sells-Floto Circus, and in 1918 joined the Coop & Lent Show. When it closed he secured a position with the World at Home Shows and followed that with a few weeks at the Chicago Permanent Exposition. He died on October 25, 1918.

Walter Shannon, whose career was very closely bound with that of C. I. Norris and H. S. Rowe, continued in show business after losing out in the auctions of 1910. One of his first positions after the sale was that of Side Show manager on the Arlington & Beckman Oklahoma Ranch Wild West Show. This outfit, which opened at Passaic, New Jersey, on April 23, 1913, made the entire season but the two men dissolved the partnership in the fall. Shannon, however, had left the show in Calgary, Alberta.

Information and research for this paper were obtained in many places and from many persons. Mike Sporrer of Redmond, Washington, performed yeoman service in locating Norris & Rowe show dates in the northwest. Much discussion with Richard Conover and use of his remarkable collection was very rewarding as was

his effort to supply the partial routes of the show from the Grace collection. Glenn Draper of Burley, Idaho, allowed this writer to peruse his material on this circus of which he has a good supply. Bob Taber provided dates and information years ago which helped start this investigation. Francis J. Carney of Felton was very kind in supplying information from Santa Cruz and escorting the writer to the winter quarters used from 1905 through 1908. The Hertzberg Collection of the San Antonio Public Library has a collection of Norris & Rowe photographs and it was at this location, with the help of Betty King, that the 1890-95 information was located. The library of the Circus World Museum contains a file of material on Norris & Rowe and a search there uncovered much information in the *Clippers* and *Billboards*. Bob Parkinson and his assistants were very helpful during two summer sessions. In closing it should be stated that much is still to be learned about the Norris & Rowe Circus. Photographs need to be discovered and routes need to be completed. It is hoped that circus historians will attempt to discover these materials and publish them so that the entire organization can enjoy a complete picture of this famous circus.

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The Circus in Fiction: An Interpretation

BY FRED D. PFENING, III

With the advent of James Otis' *Toby Tyler, or Ten Weeks with a Circus* in 1881 circus fiction was born. The plot of this novel for children is one that is most appealing to young people — that of running away to join a circus, and working oneself up from the job of peanut salesman to star performer in the big top. As is obvious from this short synopsis, the novel is very inaccurate. The book was a great success; so great in fact that Walt Disney made a feature film out of *Toby Tyler* a few years ago. This novel, although for children, was to become an omen for the rest of fiction concerning the American circus; writers do not care if they make history or logic errors, and the public can not care less if the mistakes are made.

Otis was the most proficient circus fiction writer before 1900. After his success with *Toby Tyler* he wrote *Mr. Stubbs' Brother*, date unknown; *Andy Ward*, 1895; and *The Wreck of the Circus*, 1897. All these books were for young readers, although the "controlled vocabulary" was not used. Circus novels for adults were non-existent at this time.

During the late 1890's and early 1900's circus fiction appeared mainly in the form of dime novels. Some titles of dime novel circus stories included: *Fred Fearnot's Side Show*, 1899; *Across the Continent with a Circus*, 1904; and *Trapeze Tom*, 1920. These dime novels, and others like them, represented an all time low for circus fiction. All of these "novels" had almost exactly the same format, which is almost the same as the plot of *Toby Tyler*.

An outgrowth of the dime novels was the series books for children. Edgar B. P. Darlington was the leading circus writer of this type of fiction. His "circus boys"

series included such titles as: *The Circus Boys in Dixie Land*, *The Circus Boys on the Flying Rings*, *The Circus Boy Across the Continent*, and *The Circus Boys on the Mississippi*. These books are worthless to the historian, but would probably be interesting reading to even today's ten year old.

Two other circus books in the early 1900's were *Peck's Bad Boy with the Circus* by the Hon. George W. Peck, and *Tom Cardiff's Circus* by Howard R. Garis. These books, like all the ones previously mentioned, were extremely inaccurate; but what does a youngster care if no circus has a hundred elephants even though many fictional ones did.

The 1920's brought an end to the masses of children's circus fiction, and a beginning to circus fiction for adults. Written in 1921, *The Big Tent* by Flavia Camp Canfield may be the first circus novel not written especially for children.

Jim Tully's *Circus Parade*, written in 1928, is probably the first piece of circus fiction that bothered to show a somewhat derogatory picture of the circus. Tully later became a famous writer.

During the depression there was no surplus of circus novels. Interestingly enough, however, the finest circus non-fiction book of all time, Earl C. May's *The Circus from Rome to Ringling* was published in 1932. This book is still considered to be the best single history written of the American circus.

Circus fiction since the 1930's can be classified into three categories: the historically correct ones, the ones that have no regard for the correct history of

the circus, and those that present a derogatory, but somewhat true, picture of the circus. The first and third sections are far out-shadowed by the second classification.

There have been very few historical circus novels. Of this minority, Thomas W. Duncan's *Gus the Great* is generally considered the best, if not the best of all circus fiction. The book is extremely accurate in describing the life of two of America's greatest showmen in a fictional way.

The main character of *Gus the Great* is Augustus Howard Burgoyne, who portrays almost unerringly the life of Frederick Buchanan, a name familiar to all who are students of circus history.

Nearly every facet of these two men's lives, one actual and one fictional, are parallel. Gus Burgoyne was born in 1880; Fred Buchanan, in 1872.¹ Gus lived in a town different from the one in which he became famous; Buchanan was born in Cherokee, Iowa, but made a name for himself in Des Moines and Granger, Iowa. Burgoyne worked on a newspaper before his involvement with circuses; Buchanan worked for a newspaper in Sioux City, Iowa, in the 1890's.

The early life of these two men could be considered to be "just coincidence" by a critic, but the entrance of Burgoyne and Buchanan into the field of circus management disproves that completely. In *Gus the Great* Gus Burgoyne is placed in charge of Funland Park in Tamarack, Iowa, on January 1, 1904. He first became acquainted with circuses when he purchases an elephant, named Mary, from Ivan Pawpacker for a promotion at his amusement park. Naturally, the elephant is a great attraction; so great that Gus invisions the money that can be



made by having a team of elephants on a circus.

Fred Buchanan entered into the Circus business in almost exactly the same way. Around the turn of this century he acquired a lease on Ingersoll Park in Des Moines, Iowa. In 1904 he purchased the elephant Tom-Tom from the George Jabour Carnival. Tom-Tom turned out to be a bad actor, and killed a man in 1909. He drowned on Buchanan's Circus at Cumberland, Wisconsin on June 30, 1911.²

In each of these cases a facet of Burgoyne's fictional life can be associated with an event in the actual life of Fred Buchanan. Funland Park is Ingersoll Park; Mary is Tom-Tom; and Ivan Pawpacker is George Jabour. However, as the reader will soon note, Ivan Pawpacker also portrays an actual person; but not George Jabour.



Continuing with Burgoyne and Buchanan, it is noted in *Gus the Great* that Burgoyne's Circus first takes the road in 1907 as a small wagon circus. Fred Buchanan started out a year earlier.³ In the novel Gus purchases his circus equipment from Ivan Pawpacker. Buchanan bought his property for his first wagon circus from William P. Hall, who just happens to be represented by Ivan Pawpacker in the novel.⁴ Hall and Pawpacker's numerous similarities will be discussed later in this paper.

In 1908 Gus Burgoyne makes a big move and transfers the mode of operation of his show from wagons to railroad cars. As always, he goes to Ivan Pawpacker's circus brokerage business to buy the cars.

At mid-season 1908 Fred Buchanan made the same move Burgoyne did in *Gus the Great*, and switched from a mud show to a rail show; however, Buchanan acquired his cars from Victor Lee,⁵ and the Arms Palace Stock Car Company, but none from William Hall. This is the last major discrepancy between the novel and the actual events.

About this time, Burgoyne decides to forsake his nickname of "Honest Gus" and initiate illegal, but money making,

"games" on his circus. Of course the Yankee Robinson Circus, Buchanan's show from 1906 until 1920, was famous for its gambling.

Until comparatively recent times, there were circuses on the road that sanctioned, or at least permitted, a variety of under-cover privileges, or games, to operate. This institution included the type of games the Burgoyne and Buchanan circuses had: shell games, three card monte, one armed bandits, the fake soap sale 'I've put a five dollar bill in one of these soap packages' (, craps and nearly anything else that is illegal in the realm of games of chance.

Associated with graft were the pick-pockets, the dancing girls, the short change experts,⁶ and the thieves who followed the show to rob houses while families living in them were out watching either the circus parade or the circus itself.

The big show band is pictured during a parade of the Yank Show in 1917. Woodcock Collection.

Life on the graft show was even rougher. Many shows kept special cars on the show train to help relieve the showpeople of their money by the games of chance. These cars doubled as dining cars, and were called "pie cars" for two reasons, both of which are obvious.

Wholesale looting of a town was certainly not unknown during the early 1900's by circuses. Once the Great Wallace Circus, a grafter, went as far as to steal the elk from the front of an Elk's Lodge while the circus was on its way out of the town. The statue was placed in front of the Elk's Lodge in the home town of that circus. The elk in front of the Elk's Lodge in Peru, Indiana, is a memorial to the showpeople's escapade.⁷ The Great Wallace Circus, along with Buchanan's show, had much more than the average amount of graft of the circus of 1910.

The amount of graft on Fred Buchanan's Yankee Robinson Circus was summed up by George Chindahl:

From accounts published in the

Crystal Falls and Marquette, Michigan, newspapers, it appears that the show carried many gamblers and dancing girls in the side show, and that certain town officials used this fact as a means of extorting money from the show, but when Buchanan considered their continuing demands excessive he put up a successful resistance.⁸

The "successful resistance" was that the show went into new territory, rather than cut out the rough stuff.

Graft, in a different form, still exists on circuses today. Gone are the gamblers and the girls, but they are more than capably replaced by money makers by a group of showmen known within the trade as "phone men." It is the job of the phone men to get some civic leader, corporation head, or politician to give some arbitrary amount of money to the circus "so the poor little orphans of this fair city can bring a little fun into their pitiful little lives by having the joy of seeing a real circus." Oh yes, the orphans will see the show, but the phone men have made sure that much more than the amount needed in order to finance the children has been obtained. Many old time showmen feel that this method is more successful than the games besides being closer to legal.

Returning to the subject at hand, we read that Gus' circus has failed because of the bad name show has acquired due to the graft. After a poor 1912 season Gus sells his circus to Ivan Pawpacker. During 1913 Gus and his wife go on a tour of Europe using the money from the sale of the circus.

After the 1920 season Fred Buchanan sold the Yankee Robinson Circus to William P. Hall.⁹ Why Buchanan did this is not known; the 1920 tenting season has always been considered to be one of the best seasons in this century for circuses. Since the failure of the show was evidently not the reason it closed, it can be assumed that Buchanan became tired of operating a circus and decided to get out of the business. The year 1921 is a complete blank in the biography of Fred Buchanan. Perhaps he was in Europe in 1921; at least his fictional self spent the year after he sold his circus there.

In 1920 Gus gets the urge to own a circus again, and he goes into an ill-fated partnership with Ivan Pawpacker whose equipment is used to form the Burgoyne and Pawpacker Great Three Ring Circus. This show, like Gus' previous ventures, is a very heavy grafter.

In 1923 Buchanan returned to the management field with his World Bros. Circus. Although Hall was not a partner in the show until the last two seasons, a great deal of equipment was purchased from him for the circus.¹⁰ Needless to say, the show thrived on graft.

The Burgoyne and Pawpacker Circus goes on burning up towns with its graft until the 1930 season when the depression catches up with this fictional show, and

the show train is cut in size to reduce the overhead.

The same turn of events occurred to the Robbins Bros. Circus, the title of Buchanan's new outfit. In 1930 the show train was cut to twenty cars because of bad business caused by the depression. The year 1930 was one of the worst in circus history as three major circuses closed for good, and a number of others were financially wrecked, and closed after the 1931 season.

Perhaps the most amazing "coincidence" between *Gus the Great* and the life of Fred Buchanan is the events that occur to both men in September 1931.

In *Gus the Great*, the Burgoyne and Pawpacker Circus is on the verge of bankruptcy when the show moves into Corpus Christi, Texas. Circus historian Joseph T. Bradbury describes what happened in the novel in Corpus Christi after that. He writes:

Nothing in this thoroughly enjoyable book is more exciting than that last summer when Gus had his circus on the road in partnership with Mr. Pawpacker, which ends in the slow-up (of the circus) at Corpus Christi with Gus abandoning the show and leaving Mr. Pawpacker holding the bag — which incidentally Gus has carefully emptied.¹¹

After relieving the show of its cash assets, Gus and his girl friend (not his wife) head for San Antonio, Texas.

As the senior partner in the firm, Ivan Pawpacker goes to Corpus Christi to regroup his forces, pay off the showpeople, and send the circus train home to his circus farm in Winchester, Missouri.

During the 1930 season William P. Hall finally became part owner of the Robbins Bros. Circus by default rather than partnership when he acquired a mortgage on the show. The Robbins show reported good business in the *Billboard*, but it suddenly closed at Mobile, Alabama, on September 12, 1931.¹² Fred Buchanan simply left the show and William P. Hall, just like Ivan Pawpacker, was left to face the people on the Robbins Bros. Circus. Hall ordered the show train back to his quarters in Lancaster, Missouri.

The trip from Mobile, Alabama, to Lancaster, Missouri, is considered by some circus historians as the low point of American circus history. Because the people on the circus would have to be paid off by Hall when they reached Lancaster, he ordered some of the more muscular members of the troupe to toss the weaker ones off the train. "Red-lighting" is the circus term for this act of forcibly ejecting someone from a circus train while it is in motion. A man on the Robbins Circus in 1931 described the events on the train this way:

It was the most fiendish act of brutality I have ever seen in 20 years circus business. Sitting in my berth, I saw workmen knocked off the train and roll. Some of them would not get up as though they were badly

hurt. Some were boys 18 to 20. An old man, who looked like he was between 60 and 65, begged not to be knocked off, and as he held the handle on the coach his hands were beaten loose with a cane.¹³

The leader of William P. Hall's bouncers was Ralph "Slim" Noble, the boss canvasman of the Robbins Bros. Circus. It is not unrealistic to assume that Hall promised Noble a bonus for his beating of his fellow employees. John Smith, a man in an insignificant position on the circus in 1931, signed this witnessed statement about being "redlighted" soon before his death due to the injuries of falling from the train. He wrote:

On Sunday, Sept. 13 (1931) last, between 3 and 4 a.m., near the town of Whistler, Ala., I was pushed off Train No. 2 of Robbins Bros. Circus that was moving over tracks of the Mobile & Ohio Railroad Company. I struck a switch post, causing injuries from which I am now suffering. I was pushed off train by "Slim" Noble, big top tent boss of Robbins Bros. Circus. I cannot give any reason for Noble's action other than I asked for my pay, which was four weeks overdue.¹⁴

After Gus' girl friend leaves him stranded in San Antonio without any money, he bums around the country for two years, until his luck finally changes and he becomes associated with a small carnival in Denver, Colorado, for a short time in 1933. Because he is wanted by the law for stealing the show's money, he has changed his name to Arthur H. Buckman. *Gus the Great* closes with Arthur H. Buckman (Augustus H. Burgoyne) walking off into the western sunset — and into obscurity.



Buchanan returned to the road in 1923 with the World Bros. Circus, later to become Robbins Bros. McClintock Collection.

Fred Buchanan also had to hide after he left his show in 1931. No one knows where he was or what he was doing during the years 1932 or 1933. We do know, however, that in 1934 he was general agent for Gorman Bros. Circus, operated by Tom Gorman. After his

association with the Gorman Circus Fred Buchanan becomes lost to circus historians. There are many rumors concerning his whereabouts, however, and most of them agree that he moved to the East. One report says Long Island, New York; one, White Plains, New York and still another, somewhere in Connecticut. A number of performers on the Ringling Bros., Barnum and Bailey Greatest Show on Earth Circus have told the author that they remembered Buchanan coming around the Ringling-Barnum Circus while it appeared in Madison Square Garden in the early 1940's. One report indicates that he died in May of 1959.

The other portrayal of an actual person in *Gus the Great* is the characterization of William Preston Hall by Ivan Pawpacker.

In the novel Ivan Pawpacker is a horse dealer turned circus broker. He lives in Winchester, Missouri, a county seat in the northern part of the state. It seems that one day a circus closed in Winchester, and Ivan is forced to buy the entire show to acquire the horses. This acquisition starts his career as a broker of used circuses. He will buy a circus at auction and then sell or lease parts of it to various showmen, including one A. H. Burgoyne. He operates the circus he buys from Burgoyne for a few years, but he finds out that he doesn't have nearly as much ability in running circuses as he does in buying and selling them. He is shot and killed by a former employee in 1938. At the time of his death, he is a poor man.

William P. Hall also got his start as a horse dealer and breeder. He lived in Lancaster, Missouri, the county seat of

Schuyler County in the northern part of the state. In October of 1904 he bought the Harris Nickel Plate Circus from C. C. Wilson.¹⁵ It marked his start into the circus brokerage business, although he sold the Harris Circus in less than two weeks. In January 1905 he bought the Walter L. Main Circus from the owner of the same name, and put the show on the road for the 1905 season as the Great W. P. Hall Circus.¹⁶ The circus failed

and was made part of his supply of circus equipment.

When William P. Hall died on June 29, 1932 in Lancaster he was very poor.¹⁷ By 1936 the circus farm and its assets had been taken over by the Schyler County State Bank in Lancaster.¹⁸

The numerous specific similarities between these two men, one fictional and one actual, have been integrated into the section on Burgoyne and Buchanan.



It seems quite possible, almost probable, that Thomas Duncan, the author of *Gus the Great*, "found" Fred Buchanan and interviewed him for the information used in the novel. Duncan is not a member of any circus fan or circus historian organization, and his only known connection with these groups was that he was a speaker at the 1964 convention of the Circus Fans Association at San Antonio, Texas. To a circus historian reading this novel, it is quite evident that Duncan set forth more facts about Burgoyne than the other main character, Pawpacker.

Perhaps he told his readers that he had obtained information from Buchanan and that he was portraying his life when he wrote: "This is a book of fiction. The characters and events are imaginary. Any similarity in name, appearance or disposition between these characters and actual person, dead or alive, is coincidental."¹⁹

The circus novels that have no regard for the true history of the American circus make up the largest percentage of circus novels written after the depression. A good representative of this type of book is *Black Moon* by Clark McMeekin. This book does an exceedingly good job of fowling up both history and common logic. For a start, the author has this circus, Lipscombe's Colossal and Peripatetic Show, traveling on a showboat. There were no circus boats until 1851 when the floating fleet was built in Cincinnati, Ohio, for the Spaulding and Rogers Circus.²⁰ In fact, only two amusement vessels, Chapman's Floating Theatre, and Butler's Museum Boat were built before 1839. Even the title of

Colossal and Peripatetic Show is inaccurate. In 1839 circus advertising, and advertising in general, had not evolved enough to use the fancy titles that were common in the 1870's. In the 1840 era the words "Grand Caravan" were about as liberal as the show owners would get with their use of words.

An integral part of the Liscombe Circus is its side show. This attraction consists of: a midget, a bearded lady, a fat lady.

The Old Woman in the Shoe pony float appeared in the 1923 World Bros. parade. McClintock Collection.

a giant, a tattooed man, and a strong man.

With the exception of the strong man, all of these oddities had been exhibited in this country before 1839, but none of them had been with a circus. A midget was on exhibition in this country in 1771, but not until Charles S. Stratton, better known as Tom Thumb, appeared on the Barnum's Caravan Circus in the mid-1850's had a midget or dwarf been associated with a circus.²¹ Strong men were unknown to circuses until the Saxon brothers appeared in the side show of the Ringling Bros. Circus in the late 1890's. Although fat people have been exhibited here as early as 1817, no fat person appeared as a part of a circus until the 1880's.²² It was not until the advent of the famous Captain Costentenus on the P. T. Barnum Circus that a tattooed man appeared with a circus. A Captain Bates on the W. W. Cole Circus in 1879 was the first giant to appear with a circus.

Throughout the course of the novel little references are made to events that are historically incorrect. The most notable of these errors is a reference in the novel that a member of the Liscombe troupe had done a triple somersault sometime before 1839. No one ever tried a triple before or during the year 1839. The first time it was even attempted was on the Van Amburgh Circus in 1842, but that attempt ended in death for the man.²³ It was finally accomplished by John Worland on the Adam Forepaugh Circus in 1874.²⁴

An outstanding anachronism in *Black Moon* is the mention of the circus having a "Hey Rube" in 1839. This term, which is the circus battle cry, for help in a fight between show people and town people, originated on the John Robinson Circus in 1873 as a result of the famous battle of Jacksonville, Texas.²⁵ At Jacksonville the show ran into a series of fights with the drunken bullies of that town, the net result being the deaths of two members of the Robinson company. After that stand it was decided that the show was in need of a local official to watch after the drunken members of his community. At each town on their tour, after Jacksonville, the show would contact an honest looking townier, a "rube", to watch over the rough boys of the town. Whenever trouble would arise, the circus people would cry "Hey Rube" and the town bouncer would come running. The name stuck around the circus, and is associated with trouble with town people even today, although the practice of getting a townier has long since been replaced by the police.

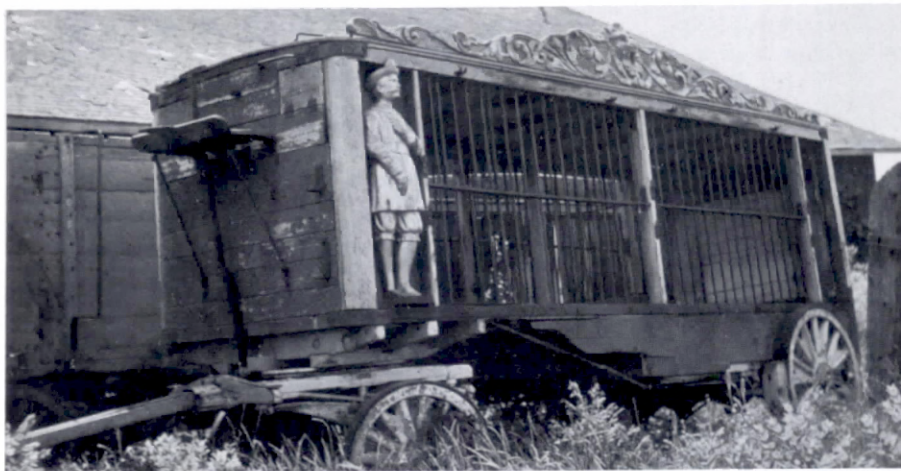
The members of the Liscombe troupe would be about as likely to know the meaning of the term "Hey Rube" as they would the word "astronaut." It is quite surprising that the author even knew the term existed.

One other error stands out a great deal to a circus historian is that the Liscombe Circus has a fortune teller in the side show. Fortune telling is a device on the shady side, and therefore considered graft. Graft, in any form, was completely unknown to the circus of 1839. In fact, the performances were thought immoral by many, and a menagerie had to be added to the performance to create a pseudo "educational institution."

Just when graft began on circuses is unknown. From the 1863 hand-written book of the Mabie Bros. Menagerie, we know that show leased out privileges that season. We can assume these operations were less than legal. This is the earliest known date the author knows of concerning the origin of graft.

Perhaps these errors do not matter some may content because the novel is, after all, fiction. But, the author etched the fact deeply in his readers minds that *Black Moon* is "historical fiction." It might be better to say that the novel, and many others like it, is fictional history; as it is from this author's point of view.

McMeekin obviously did do some research in preparation of his "historical novel." Throughout the novel historical facts that just happened to be correct were inserted by the author. Of the few correct facts, three were more prominent than others. The first one was a notice that one of the members of the Liscombe company had previously appeared with the Buckley and Weeks Circus. Such a circus did exist in 1828, and also from 1835-1837.²⁶ It is quite possible that the performer on the Liscombe show could.



have traveled with the Buckley and Weeks show as circus people are always changing circuses for one reason or another.

The second outstanding correct historical reference in *Black Moon* occurs when the owner of the Liscompbe Circus wishes that his show had a drawing card like the elephant Old Bet used to be. Old Bet, the second elephant imported to America, was owned by Hachalah Bailey of Somers, New York. The earliest definite reference on Old Bet is an agreement between Bailey and Andrew Brown and Benjamin Lent in which Lent and Brown each acquired a third interest in the elephant; this occurred on August 13, 1808.²⁷ This elephant was shot and killed in Alfred, Maine, on July 26, 1816.²⁸ During her years on exhibition she undoubtedly appeared in Vermont, where the owner of the Liscompbe Circus mentioned seeing her.

The third, and final, historically correct fact that stands out in *Black Moon* is the mention of the famous wire walker. Blodin, being a child wonder on a circus in 1839. In 1839 Charles Blodin was a child star; but his real fame came in 1859 when he became the first man to walk a wire across Niagara Falls.

The other books that fall into the same category as *Black Moon* are just as bad. It seems that the parade is the part of the circus that authors make the most errors in reporting. They obviously never stopped to realize that their fictional parades were two to three times larger than the real parades.

The third type of novel written about the circus since the depression are the ones that are extremely derogatory to the circus; however, these books are quite accurate in presenting the unknown side of the circus, a side that neither the fans nor the management likes to admit exists.

When *Cat Man*, the representative work of this category, was published in 1955, a great protest was heard from the members of the Circus Fans Association. Unfortunately these protesters were showing their ignorance in their hobby because the side of the circus in *Cat Man* is a very true one. After publication of this novel comments like these were voiced:

A hippo cage from the Barnum & Bailey show was purchased by Fred Buchanan and used on his Robbins show. It is pictured here in the Granger, Iowa, winter-quarters. Don Smith Collection.



Ben Davenport, the last of the rough and tumble circus owners is shown with his feature attraction, Joe Lewis, in 1950. Pfening Collection.

... I don't know how many ... have read it but it is probably one of the most derogatory and blasphemous books on the circus that has been written in years. Unfortunately, it was awarded the \$10,000 Fellowship Award by Houghton-Mifflin in their competition. It is written by a chap named Hoagland who traveled with the Dailey Show about 3 or 4 weeks, was treated like a king, and then came out with this book, I think when things like that appear we are entitled to be militant, and I would like to make a Motion to this group THAT THE Circus Fans Association file a vigorous and official protest to the Houghton-Mifflin Company for misrepresentation of the Circus.²⁹

It is one of the most squalid and rawest things I have ever read. Why it should receive a literary award

is incomprehensible except that he does know how to write. However, to show the worst side of anything does not seem to me to entitle anyone to anything.³⁰

"... we have the great problem of counteracting adverse publicity and adverse publications such as *The Cat Man* (sic), which is very good reading but presents a very distorted view and is a poor piece of public relations for the circus."³¹

What is in this particular novel that was disliked so much by the Circus Fans Association? Really, all Hoagland did was to portray the life of a group of men on an unidentified circus who spent every day cleaning out the cages of the animals on that circus. Since these men have no particular skill as is required in nearly all other circus jobs, they are, for the most part, the lowest rung of society. They were mostly drunks. The novel starts out with a Negro on the circus being badly beaten by some white cage men on the show. Later on, the police break up a big crap game on the show that is being held by the cage men to try to get wine money. The novel continues by telling the extremes the cage men will go to to acquire wine and beer. It is certainly not below them to rob a liquor store, or a fellow employee for that matter. Some of the men go as far as to ask children whose fathers own liquor stores to steal wine for them in exchange for free tickets to the circus.

As well as describing the degenerates on the circus, the novel exploits the gross stupidity the people who come to see the animals appear to have in the eyes of the working men on the circus.

For example:

I wonder if that bud ever gets in the cage with them damn'd things. When do they feed 'em? How dangerous are they in captivity? Those are what, pathers? — Leopards, silly, — One of them's a panther. He's black. — They've just painted him black — you can see his sports; look — you have to look carefully. Mister, when do they have the big tent up? Mister? I'd like to see him stick his hand in there. — Benny, you've seen more than enough. There are other things, Benny; come.³²

Considering the cage men knew little more about the animals than the towners, the questions look even less intelligent.

As was mentioned in the circus fan protest, Hoagland traveled with the Dailey Bros. Circus for a short time in the late 1940's. His choice of a colorful show couldn't have been any better. This circus is generally agreed to be the last of the rough-house circuses. It had the drunks, and it had the graft; but the latter was not described by Hoagland because he would not have been exposed to it to any extent with his duties in the menagerie. By looking at a few notes on the Dailey Bros. Circus it is easy to see



These elephant cars provided a setting for the author of "Cat Man", while he traveled with the Dailey show. Pfening Collection.

that Hoagland did *not* present "a very distorted view" of the circus — at least the Dailey Bros. Circus.

This circus was an outgrowth of the Davenport Society Circus. It started using the Dailey Bros. title in 1940, and was converted from a truck circus to a railroad circus in 1944. When the conversion took place, Benjamin C. Davenport, the owner, was in need of old time showmen who knew how to run a railroad circus. Among those hired by Davenport a side show manager and the notorious Ralph Hobble, both of whom were on the Robbins Bros. Circus in 1931. Along with the side show man came the graft, as he had been in charge of it on the Robbins Bros. Circus, and he was to be in charge of it on the Dailey Bros. Circus.

The Dailey show itself was an anachronism; it should have traveled in the 1920's. It was the last link between the grafting "horse operas"³³ of the brothers King, George Washington Christy, "Uncle Bob" Atterbury, and Fred Buchanan. While other circuses of the post-war period were playing it clean and breaking even, the Dailey Bros. Circus turned on the graft and made enormous profits until the 1950 season when the word finally reached enough town officials that the show was dishonest.

Since the general moral attitude of a graft show, such as the Dailey Bros. Circus or the circus in *Cat Man*, is lower than on an average circus, the drunks tend to congregate around that kind of show. From this author's limited experiences on this type of circus, he would content that the story Hoagland told was quite true. The gambling is almost completely gone from the circus, and dancing girls are also near extinct; but the drunks still form a large percentage of the working class of most circuses. Hoagland was one of the first writers to exploit this fact.

One other point that Hoagland touches on in *Cat Man* that does not deal with graft is the use of exotic nicknames on circuses. From a perusal of *Cat Man* these nicknames can be found: Heavy, Fiddler, Chief-on-Bulls, Coca Cola, Hopalong, Dry Wash, Daff, One-arm Bingo, Sundown, Bible, the Invisible Man, Tombstone, Blood Bank, and Mousy. A check of the route books issued by the Dailey Bros. Circus in 1946, 1947, and 1948 reveal the following nicknames: Streamline, Tiger Bill, America, Kid

Pusher, Deep Sea, Spooks, Musical, Dusty, Deep Sea Red, Monk, Sweet Pea, Nemo, and Heavy. Very few other authors of circus fiction have taken the time to realize that the circus has many different languages; among the performers, it is a foreign one; among the managers, it is English; and among the unskilled working men, it is a weird slang that is known only to the members of each show.

As we enter the 1970's circus fiction, except in the form of children's books, seems to be nearly non-existent. A very few fiction circus books have been published in this decade, but the majority of them are for children. The circus has evolved into an institution to which the public is extremely apathetic in the same view, the literary world is obviously apathetic to circus fiction. Neither can be called "The Greatest Show on Earth."

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Footnotes

- ¹George L. Chindahl, "Fred Buchanan," *White Tops*, 30 (November-December 1957), p. 3.
- ²"Tom-Tom the Elephant," *White Tops*, 35 (Sept.-Oct. 1962), p. 5.
- ³Chindahl, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
- ⁴Fred D. Pfening, III, "William P. Hall," *Bandwagon*, 10 (Nov.-Dec. 1966), p. 7.
- ⁵W. Quinett Hendricks, *Stranger than Fiction*, p. 60.
- ⁶Short change artists by no means excluded the employees of the circus. Circus ticket sellers are notorious for their less-than-legal actions in the ticket booth. Many of them were so good that they did not need a salary from the circus.
- ⁷Mrs. Winifried Sweeney, a member of the Wallace troupe, related this event in Uhrichsville, Ohio, on April 1, 1962.
- ⁸Chindahl, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
- ⁹Pfening, III, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
- ¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 13.
- ¹¹Joseph T. Bradbury, "Robbins Bros. Circus, Season 1931," *White Tops*, 31 (Nov.-Dec. 1958), p. 3.
- ¹²Bradbury, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
- ¹³*Ibid.*
- ¹⁴*Ibid.*
- ¹⁵Pfening, III, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
- ¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 7.
- ¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 15.
- ¹⁸In a letter written to W. H. Woodcock on July 30, 1936, R. L. Burkland, a cashier at this bank, wrote, "I was in Des Moines and saw Cole Bros. while they were there . . . Glad they have the Hall elephants instead of me. Never regretted making the sale." This indicates that the Lancaster bank owned the Hall assets. The "me" probably just refers to the bank.
- ¹⁹Thomas W. Duncan, *Gus the Great*, p. 6.
- ²⁰Philip Graham, *Showboats*, p. 197.
- ²¹R. W. G. Vail, *Random Notes on the History of the Early American Circus*, p. 49.
- ²²*Ibid.*, p. 53.
- ²³Pierre Couderc, "Truth or Fiction, Legend or Fact," *Bandwagon*, 8 (Jan.-Feb. 1964), p. 21.
- ²⁴*Ibid.*
- ²⁵Gil Robinson, *Old Wagon Show Days*, p. 63.
- ²⁶Charles Gates Sturtevant, "Who's Who in the American Circus," *White Tops*, 36 (Jan.-Feb. 1963), p. 5.
- ²⁷On January 25, 1943 William Bailey, grandson of Hachalaiah Bailey, sent Charles G. Sturtevant a copy of this document. Richard E. Conover acquired the document soon after Sturtevant's death on December 26, 1952.
- ²⁸John M. Brown, "Famous Elephant Killed when Circus Visited Maine in 1916," *Lewiston Journal*, Lewiston, Maine, (July 28, 1945).
- ²⁹Comments of Ivan Myers at the 1956 convention of the Circus Fans Association at Sarasota, Florida.
- ³⁰Comments of Herman Linden at the 1956 convention of the Circus Fans Association at Sarasota, Florida.
- ³¹Comments of Fred Pfening, Jr. at the 1956 convention of the Circus Fans Association at Sarasota, Florida.
- ³²Edward Hoagland, *Cat Man*, pp. 60-61.
- ³³This term is simply another for the word "circus." Recently the author discovered that it was used by the *Tri-Weekly Republic*, Springfield, Ohio in 1864 in connection with a circus.

BUCK JONES WILD WEST SHOWS AND ROUND UP DAYS

By Joseph T. Bradbury,
Associate Editor

Foreword: In the Nov-Dec 1965 Bandwagon Fred D. Pfening Jr. had a major article on the Buck Jones Wild Show. At that time very few photographs had turned up of this 15 car railroad show which was on the road for only a few months in 1929. Since then the Bandwagon has printed several additional photos as they would be found in various museums or elsewhere. Interest in the Buck Jones show has always been high among circus historians even though the show was on the road a relatively short time. This is largely because of the popularity of Buck Jones as a movie cowboy star who is still very fondly remembered by the "sorta forty, mostly fifty" group of historians, including your associate editor. In fact, Buck Jones, was my favorite and those innumerable Saturdays spent at the local cinema in the early and mid 1930's when Buck was on the screen will never be forgotten. Tom Mix was primarily in silent films a few years prior to Buck's peak in pictures. Buck appeared mainly in the "new fangled talkies" and the sounds mingled

with the sights of the old west made boyhood in those days something precious. I was in the army at Ft. Warren in Cheyenne, Wyo., surrounded by the sights and sounds so often depicted in Buck's movies, that sad day in November 1924 when the press and radio announced the death of Buck Jones in the Coconut Grove fire in Boston. I still recall very vividly the pain I felt when I heard of Buck's death and recalled the many happy hours of pleasure he had given me and my crowd when we were growing up.

CHS Joe Rettinger has recently acquired considerable additional information on the Buck Jones Wild West

Photo No. 1 - Buck and Dell Jones with their horses, Silver and Bumps, on the winter quarters lot at Lankershire (North Hollywood), Calif., May 1929. Tent in background was erected to house some of the activities in framing the new 15 car Buck Jones Wild West Shows and Round Up Days. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Buck Jones.

Show. During the past few months he has taped interviews with several people who were on the show, including Montie Montana Sr., who was a performer along with his mother and father; Gordon Jones, who was arena director, and also Mrs. Buck Jones who is currently living in North Hollywood, Calif. Joe also talked with Buck's daughter, Mrs. Maxine Jones Firfires and several others close to the Jones show. Mrs. Jones and Montie Montana have very graciously loaned a number of photographs from their personal collection for us to use with this article.

This material will be presented in two installments. The first will deal with events leading up to the show's final closing at Danville, Ill. July 12, 1929. The conclusion will cover in detail the events of the show's closing in Danville and subsequent developments. Hopefully additional photographs will be available by then. Information appearing in the 1965 article will not be repeated. Copies of that issue are available from the editor.

Mrs. Del Jones, Buck's widow, says that when the idea of organizing a wild west show was presented to him in the early spring of 1929 she was much opposed to it, but Buck got all excited about it when advised he could make a million with the show, so, later to be regretted, he decided to frame and show to go out that season. She said they owned ten acres of land in Lankershire, Calif., which is now known as North Hollywood, and on that site the show was organized, rehearsals held, and gave it's first performance.

Mrs. Jones said Buck's principal horse he had with the show and one he used in movies was Silver and he also carried along two other horses as doubles, Eagle and Sandy. Her horse was named Bumps. The Jones' daughter, Maxine, who was 11 at the time, traveled with the show and appeared in the performance riding a pony.

One of the show's sleeping cars was named, "Maxine" after Buck's daughter, another named, "Eagle" after one of his horses and although not positive Mrs. Jones believes a third car was named Sandy, after another horse, or possibly Santa Barbara. She says they had a private car on the train and hopefully she can find a photograph of it which





Photo No. 2 - Buck Jones riding his famous movie horse, Silver, on the winterquarters lot at Lankershire (North Hollywood) Calif., May 1929. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Buck Jones.

will be run in the next installment. It appears the show at the start had a total of 4 sleepers, including the private car. Information contained in the 1965 article indicated the train was made up as follows: 1 advance, 6 flats, 3 stocks, 1 system stock car, and 4 sleepers, making a total of 15.

Gordon Jones says that he arrived in the North Hollywood quarters about two weeks prior to start of the show. The canvas arena, which came from Baker-Lockwood Co. was up and rehearsals held there and several other tents were erected to serve for various quarters purposes. The rail cars were parked on a siding some distance away where Judd Bullock, trainmaster, and his crew got them ready for the road. Gordon Jones estimated the show had around 90 to 100 people with it, workmen, staff, and performers, and Montie Montana said the show had some 50 to 60 horses with it. No wild west cattle were carried at the beginning of the season, although some were added at Kansas City as will be related later.

One of the most interesting of the photos printed here is of the large truck the Buck Jones show had. It was a chain-driven Pierce Arrow and although this make was not a prevalent on shows in those days as were the more familiar Macks still there were several of them on various circuses and outdoor shows. Sells-Floto had one. The Pierce Arrow truck hauled most of the wagons to and from the train to the lot but at times the show would often use additional local rented trucks, a custom followed by most carnivals in the late 20's. Some feel the show also had a Chevrolet truck but others think the Pierce Arrow was the only one carried. The show did have a "funny ford" auto used in the performance and Buck Jones' private Packard

automobile was carried. Most of the times the Packard loaded on the flats although during a few of the California stands it was driven overland.

Montie Montana was 19 when he was on the Buck Jones show in 1929. He was with his mother and father and the family used their real name of Mickel. Later Montie adopted for show purposes the name of Montana. He says that both Buck and Dell Jones were real fine people and good to him and his family. They had been with various outdoor shows prior to Buck's entry into movies. Despite the rather turbulent times during the show's short lived tour he blames none of it on the Jones. Montie says several people whom Buck trusted took advantage of him and this led to most of the difficulties.

Joe Rettinger with the aid of several people, especially F. P. Carney who travelled a number of miles checking various newspaper files, has come up with practically the complete route played by the Buck Jones show. Several uncertain points in the 1965 article have been cleared up and with exception of only one or two stands the following route can be assumed to be correct.

The show had an official opening matinee on Sunday, May 12 at it's North Hollywood quarters, then from May 13 thru 15 it held additional rehearsals. The first move was to Ventura where performances were given on May 16. Santa Barbara was played May 17th and in all probability the show was at Santa Maria on the 18th. The show billed King City on Sunday, 19th, but never played and moved on to Salinas where performances were given on the 20th. It was at Monterey, May 21st, Watsonville, 22nd, and Gilroy, 23rd.

On May 24 the show took part in the Water Carnival Parade at Stockton, Calif. but no performance was given,

Photo No. 4 - Buck Jones Wild West Show loading flat cars at Danville, Ill. enroute to the William P. Hall Farm, Lancaster, Mo. July 1929. The huge Pierce Arrow truck shown in foreground was chain driven and equipped with solid rubber tires. It pulled most of the wagons to and from the lot



Photo No. 3 - Mrs. Dell Jones on Silver, winterquarters lot at Lankershire (North Hollywood) Calif. May 1929. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Buck Jones.

but the following day, May 25th two performances were given in Stockton.

May 26 was on a Sunday and the show moved on to Vallejo but did not give a show. George Perkins recalls that he and Buck went fishing that day. Two performances were given on the 27th. The show played San Jose on 28th and although it is not definitely determined it is believed Redwood City was played the 29th. Four days, May 30 thru June 2 saw the show in San Francisco and it was in Oakland June 3-4. Sacramento was scheduled for June 5 but the date was blown and show went on to Reno, Nev. which was played June 6.

It was evident almost from the start that the show had financial difficulties, but even some of the staff were not aware how serious. Gordon Jones recalls he

each day. Flat No. 15, the run car, was one of the six flat cars the show got from the Warren Tank Car Co. and shows in detail the attractive way the flats were painted and lettered. This is the first photo showing the Buck Jones flat cars to turn up. Montie Montana Collection.





Photo No. 5 - Montie Mickel (Montana) with rope and Jack Wayne standing on the Buck Jones Wild West Show lot in front of one of the show's baggage wagons. Note the wagon is equipped with steel tired wheels. Although most of the wagons came from the Fairyland Guaranteed Shows, a railroad carnival, Gordon Jones recalls that all wagons had steel tired wheels rather than the hard rubber tired wheels many carnivals were putting on their wagons in those days. Montie Montana Sr. Collection.

did not know the show planned to blow the Sacramento date, which latter was learned was necessary to get out of California fast to avoid attachments. Gordon says he had spent the night with friends following the final performance in Oakland and planned to join the show early the next morning at Sacramento. When he arrived in that city he learned the show had not arrived and no one had any knowledge of it. Inquiring at the local railroad depot he was told the show had been routed directly on to Reno, so Gordon had to catch a train there himself but arrived in plenty of time to perform his duties the next day.

Two additional Nevada stands followed, June 7 at Winnemucca and June 8 at Elko. Sunday, June 9 was an off date as show moved to Ogden, Utah where two performances were given June 10, followed the next day by two at Salt Lake City, 11th. The show played Provo on the 12th and Price 13th then went into Colorado where it was at Grand Junction

on June 14. CFA June Curry was living in Grand Junction at the time and remembers seeing the show. Montrose was played June 15 and an off Sunday brought the show to Glenwood Springs, Colo. where performances were given June 17 and then events brought the show to a temporary halt.

According to those on the show early stands brought pretty good business but the swing across Nevada and Utah had been very poor. At Glenwood Springs the advance car had halted. It had run out of funds and was unable to move. According to the Billboard the Jones show had booked stands to follow Glenwood Springs at Salida, Cannon City, Pueblo, Colorado Springs, and Denver but these stands were never played and obviously never even billed since the advance car had been held up. CHS Warren Wood recently checked the newspaper files at Denver and no mention whatsoever could be found concerning

the expected appearance of the Buck Jones show.

Gordon Jones says that at Glenwood Springs DeWitt Prichard who was an investor in the show sent his representative, L. L. McBroom, there with additional funds which enabled the show to move on to Kansas City where it would be reorganized and the route resumed. The advance car was made a part of the regular train. Some say the show had a feed stop at Denver but others contend the show by-passed Denver enroute to Kansas City. For sure it would have been necessary to have a feed stop somewhere along the way and according to way the show would have been routed it could have very easily gone by way of Denver. However, even if so and if a feed stop did occur in Denver, in searching the newspaper files Warren Wood could find no mention of it.

At Kansas City the train was parked by an old unused factory building and the reorganization took place there. The advance car was fixed up as a sleeper and the rented Pullman car was turned back to the company. A couple of trucks were to be used for the advance when the route was resumed. Gordon Jones says while at Kansas City a number of cattle were obtained, including a big Scotch highlander steer. Prior to then no cattle had been carried as the show was fearful of hoof and mouth disease and the difficulties it always caused traveling shows during outbreaks and subsequent quarantines. Gordon Jones thinks there were a few Bramas in the group but Montie Montana doesn't remember any. But in any event the show never did use the cattle in the performance as it was later felt it would just be too dangerous and with all of the other difficulties the show had the last thing it would want would be an injury to some patron caused by one of the steers getting into the strands thru the flimsy netting. Jones says the big Scotch highlander was taken to the lot for exhibition purposes but rest of the stock usually



Photo No. 6 - Left to right Mrs. Ben Dobbins, Mrs. E. O. Mickel (mother of Montie Montana) and Johnny Tantlinger stand in front of the advance car of the Buck Jones Wild West Show. This photo was taken at Danville, Ill. after the advance car became part of the regular show train. Montie Montana Sr. Collection.



Photo No. 9 - Maxine Jones, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Buck Jones, and Montie Mickel (Montana) trick and fancy roper, in the arena of the Buck Jones Wild West Show at Lankershire, Calif., May 5, 1929, a few days before the show opened the season. Photo by Frank A. Fernekes. (Montie Montana Collection)

remained near the system stock car which was added at Kansas City to transport them. It is the author's belief that the system stock car, traditionally said to have been with the Buck Jones train, probably was not used until after show left Kansas City, but this is only surmised. Quite possibly a system stock was carried from the beginning for some reason.

Prichard made certain arrangements and business methods to be followed (to be discussed in detail in the next installment) by the show and the route was

Photo No. 8 - Bill Penny and his group of Sioux Indians performing in the arena of the Buck Jones Wild West Show, season of 1929. Note the lighting stands in background. Montie Montana Collection.



Photo No. 7 - Montie Mickel (Montana) and Buck Jones' horse, Silver, on the lot of Buck Jones Wild West Show, season of 1929. In background is the show's horse tent. Montie Montana Collection.

resumed with first stand coming at Sedalia, Mo. on July 1st. So far no stand for July 2 has been determined but on the 3rd show was at Marshall, Mo. which was followed by Mexico, Mo. 4th, Carlinville, Ill. 5th, Granite City, Ill. 6th and an off day Sunday 7th. The show remained in Illinois with additional stands at Alton, July 8, Springfield, 9th, Bloomington, 10th, Champaign, 11th, and finally Danville 12th where developments again halted the show.

The Bandwagon staff is most grateful to CHS Joe Rettinger and his efforts to obtain this most interesting additional information on the Buck Jones Wild West Show. Our sincere thanks also go to Warren Wood, George Perkins, F. J. Carney, Gordon Jones, Montie Montana Sr., Mrs. Maxine Jones Firfires, and Mrs. Buck Jones for their help in aiding us to preserve for posterity the history of the Buck Jones Wild West Shows and Round Up Days.

INTERNATIONAL FANS MEETING IN AMSTERDAM

The Fifth International Congress of Circus Fans will be held in Amsterdam, Holland, on

September 21, 22, and 23, 1972. The fourth International Congress was held in Barcelona, Spain, in 1968, and was attended by 180 persons from nine countries.

Discussions begun at the Barcelona meeting will be continued and the papers presented will be translated into a number of languages. Other activities include a reception at the Heineken brewery, followed by a moonlight cruise of the canals of Amsterdam. There will be a visit to the circus exposition and a visit to a circus.

CHS member Ted Haussman of Wellesley, Mass. is considering a two week circus tour of Europe that would coincide with the International meeting. Any one interested in the circus tour should contact Mr. Haussman.

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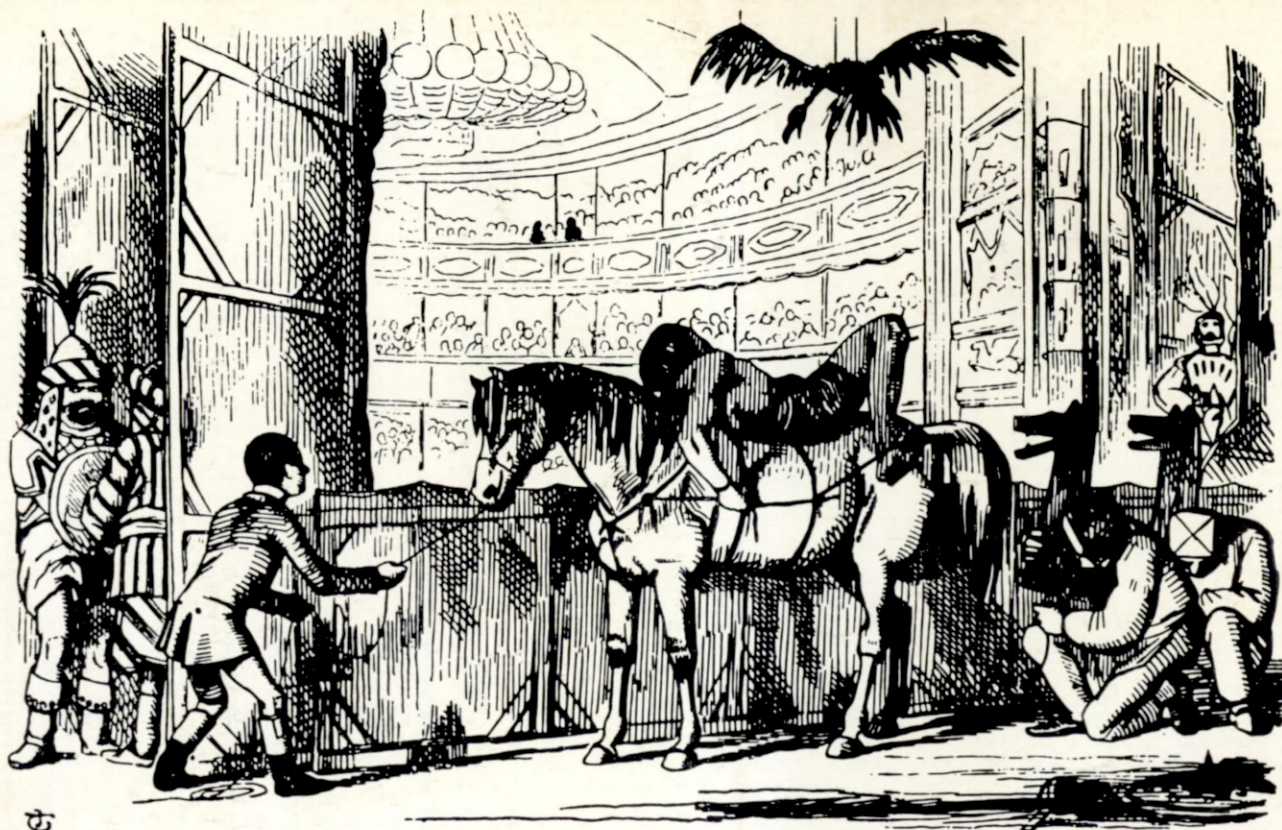
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